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## ANCIENT COMETS.

In a work of extraordinary erudition which has been presented to the Library of the LICK Observatory by Professor PICKERING of the Harvard College Observatory\* I find (in the Index) twenty-four references to *comets* which have appeared. Nearly all of these references should be consulted by anyone who is compiling a catalogue of historic comets. Three of them contain something noteworthy.

I therefore copy these three extracts :

Page 471 : "14 A. D. = 1st year of the 'thiang-foung' of the usurping Sinmang" or Wang-mang—(Chinese Chron. table). "The same year" and "before the death of AUGUSTUS" (Clint. iv. page 45) a *comet*. Observed by L. SENECA, nat. qu. i, 1. [This is No. 54 of WILLIAMS' Chinese Comets, page 54.]

Page 475 : "19 A. D." (Tacit. and Clint.) Visit to Egypt of GERMANICUS; and his death on his way thence in Syria. At this time a *comet* observed by L. SENECA, nat. qu. i, 1 (Clint. iv. p. 45).

Page 477 : "31 A. D." (Sueton., Dio. and Clint.) disgrace and death of SEJANUS, prefect of the prætorian guard and consul for this year. A *comet* visible at the time, witnessed by L. SENECA, nat. qu. i, 1 (Clint. iv. p. 45). E. S. H.

## SCIENTIFIC VISITORS TO THE LICK OBSERVATORY.

Professor W. D. ALEXANDER of Honolulu, Chief of the Geodetic Survey of Hawaii, made a visit to the LICK Observatory during the month of September. Mr. E. D. PRESTON of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey made a determination of the force of gravity at Mount Hamilton, September 27–October 1, using the new short-pendulum apparatus, devised by Professor MENDENHALL. This is the third determination of gravity at L. O., the first having been made by Mr. PRESTON, with one of the PEIRCE seconds pendulums, in 1883 (*Publ. A. S. P.*, Vol. I, page 125), and the second by Professor MENDENHALL, in the summer of 1891 (*Publ. A. S. P.*, Vol. III, page 282). E. S. H.

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\* Chronological History of Plants: Man's Record of His Own Existence, illustrated through their names, uses and companionships; by CHARLES PICKERING, M. D. Boston, 1879: quarto.

THE TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE OF APRIL, 1893.

A letter lately received from Dr. JOHN THOME, Director of the National Observatory of the Argentine Republic, Córdoba, announces that he intends to observe the total eclipse of April, 1893, "on or near the railway and telegraph line to Salta" from Rosario de la Frontera, Argentine Republic. The object of the expedition will be to observe the contacts, to search for *Vulcan* and to secure photographs of the Corona. E. S. H.

DISCOVERY OF COMET *c*, 1892.

Professor BARNARD found Comet *c* 1892 recorded on one of his photographs of the Milky-Way on October 12. It was observed visually on October 13 and its orbit has been computed by Professor CAMPBELL. See these *Publications*, page 265. E. S. H.

*JUPITER AND HIS SYSTEM\** [BY MISS ELLEN M. CLERKE].

While Miss AGNES CLERKE is making an excursion into antiquity in her recent book (*Studies in Homer*), and has temporarily deserted Astronomy after printing her two admirable volumes (*The History of Astronomy in the XIX Century*, and *The System of the Stars*), her sister, Miss ELLEN CLERKE, comes forward with a capital little pamphlet on *Jupiter and His System*. In about forty small pages a complete popular account of our present information regarding this planet and its satellites is given, in an interesting and straightforward way, equally removed from dullness and from the faintest trace of "smart writing." Members of the Society will do well to read this little book. E. S. H.

WHO OWNS AN AEROLITE?

"DES MOINES (Iowa), October 4, 1892.

"On May 2, 1890, an aerolite weighing sixty-six pounds fell on the land of JOHN GODDARD, in Winnebago County. PETER HOAGLAND dug it up and conveyed it to his house, and sold it as

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\* Published by STANFORD, 27, Cockspur St., London. Price, 1 shilling.